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Boy: It is not paddy, tied in a cloth,
Or paddy stored in baskets, O dear;
What will be the sign to know things from?

There is, however, no customary initiation into the mysteries of sex, as making the boys "*hunsiar*" noted by Father Elwin in the case of the Baiga, or "Chalak kora" as one hears in Birbhum rural parlance, when boys are said to be sent to fairs to be sexually experienced.

Added to all these, there is the undisputed fact that boys and girls are used by young men and women freely in their love-affairs and intrigues as mediums to send presents of *handia* (rice-beer) to the lover or *nkhra* (fried paddy) or articles of toilet to the beloved. Very frequently, children thus act as go-betweens in adult love-making and become very helpful in the conduct of affairs in hills and jungles, and naturally enough, as they grow up, they (children) get accustomed to love themselves and come to relish the flavour of such adventures.

It will be clear from the above, how the sex-instinct is developed in children and, although, in the dawn, the manifestations are more or less unconscious, sexual consciousness is in the way of development as an active factor in the boy or girl's psychic make-up. We questioned a number of Santals as to the average age when sexual consciousness of children develops into a factor to be reckoned

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with. Some gave the age for male children at 6 to 7 years, while others were variously disposed and placed the age at 8, 10 and 11 years. The approximate age given for female children also varied from 8 to 14 years. At this period, boys and girls display signs of restiveness and want to frequent the dances, specially "Lagre", the moon-light mixed dance.

On attaining puberty, girls become very afraid of menstrual blood. But this dread has no particular superstition attached to it; it is merely the reaction of a mere girl to a strange physiological change in her system. An educated Santal told us that girls are asked to observe ceremonial uncleanliness for a period and required not to touch pitchers, nor are they allowed to enter places of worship. But this was not corroborated by others. This throws light on the influences of Hindu ideas and practices on the present-day Santals. Village-elders were definite that there is no ceremony whatsoever with puberty. While under menstruation, girls wear a *kupni* ("a narrow strip of cloth passing between the thighs, and stuck into a waist-string before and behind, to conceal the privy parts" – Dr. Campbell), but after three or four days, they cease wearing it. They can touch anything and no peculiar dress or sign is worn by girls to signify that they have attained puberty. The weight of evidence at our disposal